

The Wall Street Journal editorialized that the plaintiff firm's requests have no legal merit and their purpose is simply to intimidate and coerce these folks.

In June 2003, the presidents of several major tort reform associations got slapped with subpoenas only after they appeared at a press conference to speak out against the outrageous litigation abuse in Madison County, Illinois. The subpoenas demanded that two of the individuals travel halfway across the country a month later to appear for a deposition in a product liability case. Once again, the clear purpose of these subpoenas was to harass and intimidate.

At an April 2004 public forum hosted by Washington University Law School in St. Louis, former U.S. Attorney General and former U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Griffin Bell said that counties like Madison County that are known for treating civil defendants unfairly are a stain on our system. Judge Bell called for a Federal investigation into the administration of civil justice in Madison County, but again the wrath of the judicial hellhole was felt the very next day. A Madison County judge retaliated by barring Judge Bell and his firm from appearing in their courtroom.

Madam Speaker, we will continue this discussion every night until somebody looks into the injustices of Madison County, Illinois.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I ask to proceed out of order and take the time of my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

ACCUTANE'S IMPACT ON BRAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, last night I spoke on the floor about the troubling new information about the effects of Accutane. I will continue to speak out and advise Americans about the dangers of Accutane until the FDA does its job.

Next to me is a PET scan taken from a study completed by Dr. J.D. Bremner from Emory University. It is a brain scan of a patient who took Accutane. The first scan on the far right is the baseline scan before the patient even began Accutane. On my left here is a

scan after 4 months of Accutane treatment. Dr. Bremner studied 30 patients, 15 on Accutane and 15 on antibiotics.

His research found that Accutane affects the metabolism of the orbitofrontal cortex, a brain area known to mediate depression in the front part of the brain. Four months after the baseline PET scan was taken, he found that with antibiotics, they had no changes in the brain. Accutane patients, those who complained of headaches, had a change in the front of the brain.

Even an untrained eye can see there is a difference in this PET scan. There is a 21 percent difference in the brain after 4 months of Accutane.

Dr. Bremner will present the findings of his study in November at a neuroscience conference. I will share those complete findings at that time. For now, his abstract is found on the Internet and we can see that Accutane causes changes in brain function.

Why is this important? Here is an e-mail I received from a family in North Carolina. "On July 12, 2004, our precious 17-year-old son, Nicholas, took his life by a gunshot to his head. He had been taking the drug Accutane. I have read about what happened with your son, and certainly understand what you and your family are feeling. Like your son, Nicholas was a star athlete and honor student. Please send us any information you think would be of help. We are overcome with grief and still have a hard time realizing that he could take himself away from us and his four siblings."

I receive an e-mail like this on average once a week or so. As of 2004, according to reports received by the FDA, there have been 235 suicides associated with Accutane. The FDA admits they are receiving only 1 of 10 percent of the actual events being reported. If 235 suicides represents 10 percent of the total, that would mean there are actually 2,350 suicides associated with this drug. If 235 suicides have been reported and it represents 1 percent of the total, that would mean there are actually 23,500 suicides associated with this drug.

Still, the drug manufacturer, Hoffmann-LaRoche, Roche Pharmaceuticals, continues to deny that Accutane affects the brain. Just look at this scan. It does. FDA believes there is a link. That is why there is a bold warning on its label, "Accutane may cause depression, psychosis, and, rarely, suicide ideation, suicide attempts, suicide, and aggressive and/or violent behaviors."

However, the FDA says they do not know the reason for this link. They need to look at these PET scans. They need to demand research, they need to demand answers. The bottom line, 235 young people have taken their life while on Accutane, including our son, B.J., who died in May of 2000.

Some patients never recover from their adverse effects to the drug. There is damage to the brain. I am constantly

receiving e-mails like this one from Michigan. "Dear Congressman, Just a note to thank you for your ongoing effort to educate the public about the dangers of Accutane. I am a psychiatric social worker in a hospital emergency room, and whenever I meet an adolescent patient who is depressed and taking Accutane, it raises a red flag. I make sure that the other social workers are informed about its link with depression and suicide, as I have a personal connection with it."

"My son Eric was an outgoing, happy kid and a respected leader in his school. He began taking Accutane at age 16 and, a few months later, began having difficulty keeping up in school. He failed to turn in homework and his grades took a nose-dive. To make a long story short, he became deeply depressed and he began talking about ending his life. That is when we knew this was not the run-of-the-mill ups and downs that teenagers sometimes have. We did manage to get help for him, but it was a long journey through a dark tunnel of despair. He is now 23 and still has a bright, articulate mind, but he is forever marked by the depression that stole his joy during adolescence. It is because of his journey that I have added an MSW degree to my high school teaching credentials, so I can be more educated to help young people who are at risk."

As we can see, there is damage done to the brain. Why the FDA allows Roche to continue to market this drug is beyond me. We should not leave this drug out there until these questions are answered. Questions such as, is this damage to the brain permanent? For more than 20 years, the FDA has done little to address the adverse effects caused by Accutane. We know Accutane affects the brain. It is time for the FDA to pull this drug from the market until all of the questions surrounding Accutane are fully addressed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)